

**MANSFIELD DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Thursday, January 7, 2016  
Mansfield Town Hall  
Town Council Chambers**

**4:00 PM**

**MINUTES**

Present: Steve Bacon, Tom Callahan, Mona Friedland, Matt Hart, Riley Hasson, George Jones, Steve Kegler, Mike Kirk, June Krisch, Bonnie Kumiega, Toni Moran, Diana Pelletier, Steve Rogers, Paul Shapiro, and Bill Simpson

Board Member Emeritus: Betsy Paterson

Staff: Cynthia van Zelm

**1. Call to Order**

Vice President Steve Bacon called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm in President Philip Lodewick's absence.

New Board member Steve Kegler introduced himself as did the rest of the Board members.

**2. Opportunity for Public to Comment**

There was no public comment.

**3. Approval of Minutes of December 3, 2015**

June Krisch made a motion to approve the minutes of December 3, 2015. George Jones seconded the motion. Riley Hasson and Steve Kegler abstained. The motion was approved.

**4. Executive Director Report**

Cynthia van Zelm reported that the Oaks is almost fully leased for the lease period starting in August. She also said that the first town homes in Main Street Homes should be ready for its owners in March.

With respect to business tenants, Gansett Wraps will open this Sunday; Blaze Pizza and Tea More Café are scheduled to open by the end of January; and NICABM is expected to open at

the end of February. Ms. van Zelm said the fit out of Pearl and Salt, new retail operations from the owner of Bliss, will start next week.

Ms. van Zelm said she is looking to change the date of the Feb. Board meeting so Francine Christiansen, the strategic plan consultant, can attend. She said the date of Feb. 18 is problematic for some people, so she will send out some new dates soon.

## **5. Approval of Contract with Christiansen Consulting for Strategic Plan**

Betsy Paterson made a motion to authorize Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm to sign a contract with Christiansen Consulting for development of a three-year organizational strategic plan at a cost of \$15,000, not including incidental expenses, e.g. photocopying. Diana Pelletier seconded the motion.

Matt Hart noted that there may be a need for additional consultant assistance from someone or a firm that is very familiar with municipal government.

Bill Simpson asked how the consultant would be funded. Tom Callahan indicated that the Partnership carries a healthy fund balance which will allow for the funding of a consultant.

Paul Shapiro offered a substitute motion to Ms. Paterson's motion to address both motions presented by Partnership staff. Ms. Paterson withdrew her motion. Mr. Shapiro made a motion to authorize Executive Director Cynthia van Zelm to sign a contract with Christiansen Consulting for development of a three-year organizational strategic plan at a cost of \$15,000, not including incidental expenses, e.g. photocopying, and approve an additional \$5,000 to the \$15,000 for additional sub-consultants as needed. Mr. Callahan seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

## **6. Appointment of Betsy Paterson as Chair of the Celebrate Mansfield Festival Subcommittee**

Mr. Shapiro make a motion to appoint Betsy Paterson as chair of the Partnership's Celebrate Mansfield Festival subcommittee. Mr. Simpson seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

## **7. Appointment of Kim Cash and Mike Young to the Business Development and Retention Committee**

Steve Rogers made a motion to appoint Kim Cash and Mike Young to the Business Development and Retention Committee. Mona Friedland seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Mr. Rogers raised the issue of how to address committee members who do not attend meetings. Ms. van Zelm said that the Bylaws allow for committee members to be removed if

they miss three unexcused meetings in a row. Committee members are appointed on a yearly basis. It was suggested by Mr. Shapiro that a letter thanking committee members be sent to them when they leave a committee.

## **8. Report from Committees**

### Advertising and Promotion

Chair Toni Moran said the Committee is starting to review its charge vis a vis the work that will commence on the strategic plan.

Ms. van Zelm said several events are planned for this spring and summer including a spring pup crawl; Summer Concerts on the Square in June and July; and movies in June, July and August.

### Business Development and Retention

Chair Steve Rogers said he invited Kim Cash, the owner of Bliss, to present to the Committee at its last meeting which she did. She then agreed to join the Committee.

### Finance and Administration

Matt Hart referred to Agenda Item #8 which is the memo that he reviewed with the Town Council on November 23, 2015 on the estimated real estate assessment for Storrs Center. He noted that Hart Realty Advisers has filed a tax appeal for some of the Storrs Center property; these estimates are prior to any potential tax appeal settlement. Mr. Hart also said that the estimates had not been fully vetted by Storrs Center master developer LeylandAlliance.

Mr. Hart said the Town's Grand List is updated every October 1 which forms the basis for the taxes for the next fiscal year.

Mr. Hart referenced the 7 year abatement for EdR which began in FY2013/2014 for Phase 1A, and began in FY2014/2015 for Phase 1B.

The net taxes do not include expenses including the Town's contribution to the Partnership.

Mr. Hart noted that these most recent projections are fairly close to the projections done a few years ago.

In response to a question on the Hart Realty Advisers tax appeal, Mr. Hart gave an overview of assessments in general. He said properties are assessed differently depending on how far along they are in construction. He said appeals are generally based on the value of the property being incorrect or that the assessment is not equitable.

He said a key data point for the assessment is that the Town went through revaluation. The rental income and sales price of the Storrs Center commercial property became important data for the assessment that was placed on the property.

In response to a question about whether EdR is appealing its taxes, Mr. Hart replied in the negative.

Mr. Callahan asked how the value of the residential property compares with the commercial property. Mr. Hart said of the \$2.3 million in gross taxes for October 1, 2014 as noted in his memo, approximately \$600,000 account for the value of the EdR residential property.

Mr. Callahan said the Committee reviewed the Partnership's preliminary budget for FY2016/2017.

### Membership Development

Chair George Jones said the Committee made some changes to the membership renewal letters which will go out shortly.

He said the Committee will review a list of potential new members to solicit for membership.

### Planning and Design

Chair Steve Bacon said the Committee met with UConn Associate Professor Kristin Schwab and her students to give them feedback for priority improvements for the public areas in Storrs Center. The Committee told Ms. Schwab and the students that they were looking for a wide variety of options for the spaces.

## **9. Other**

Mr. Jones expressed concerns about the UConn Co-op. Mike Kirk said UConn has released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a bookstore operator that would sell textbooks, apparel and general books. Responses are due at the end of January. He indicated that the UConn Co-op is expected to respond to the RFP. Mr. Kirk said a committee will be formed to review proposals.

Ms. Krisch said a letter in the Chronicle suggested that people send a letter of support for the UConn Co-op to UConn President Herbst.

## **10. Adjourn**

Ms. Paterson made a motion to adjourn. Diana Pelletier seconded the motion. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

*Minutes taken by Cynthia van Zelm.*